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NSC review completed

The White House

Washington

THE CABINET

Orientation of Top-Level Non-Career Executives

The attached approved paper is circulated for the action of each recipient Department and Agency.

The proposals in this paper were approved at the Cabinet meeting of Friday August 2, 1957 (RA - 57-82, Item 4).

The Cabinet Secretariat is distributing this paper for action to other agencies and commissions affected.

The Cabinet Secretariat will in the very near future communicate with the Cabinet Assistants and the Executive Assistants in the affected agencies to arrange for early implementation of this paper.

Maxwell M. Rabb
Secretary to the Cabinet

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Orientation of Top Level Non-Career Executives

Problem: When an individual is newly appointed to a responsible position there are many types of information which he must acquire before he can be expected to perform effectively. This is particularly true for high-level positions with broad responsibilities such as those of agency heads and assistant agency heads. Moreover, appointees to those positions usually have had no previous service with the agency and frequently have not had previous Government experience. Although informal methods of briefing are being used for top-level non-career executives, there is a need for more systematic, thorough, and timely orientation of such officials if they are to serve the President, the Congress and the public to the full extent of their capabilities, beginning as early as possible in their term of office.

Proposal: Purpose: Twentieth century government has by this time become a matter of teamwork. At top levels of Departments and major agencies, depth of knowledge is equalled if not superceded in importance by breadth of perspective; the departmental and interdepartmental coordination; and program enthusiasm tempered by awareness of Presidential and Administration-wide objectives. A fuller sense of teamwork can be gained if each Agency provides an early and systematic means for pointing out to each top level appointee not only his individual responsibilities, but in addition the broader dimension of how his contributions must be fitted in to what the President is striving to accomplish for the Nation as a whole and for the world.

Proposal: Agency Responsibilities: Each executive department, agency, board and commission should develop a plan for orientation of newly appointed non-career executives. Initially, this plan should be limited to secretaries, deputy, under and assistant secretaries of departments, heads and assistant heads of agencies, chairmen and members of boards and commissions and certain other top-level officers who have been away from the United States for long periods of time. Agencies should, however, give consideration to expanding the plan, at a later date, to include other non-career executives.

Scope of Each Agency's Orientation Plan: As a minimum, each Agency's plan shall provide for covering the following subject matter:

1. Such supplementary information concerning the Constitution of the United States, the separation of powers and the organization and functions of the Executive Branch and its relationships with the Legislative and Judicial Branches as may be pertinent to the appointee individually, particularly within the context of his Agency's functions.
2. The external relationships of the department or agency -- with:
 - a. The Congress
 - b. The Executive Office of the President including the White House Office.
 - c. Various central agencies such as the Civil Service Commission, the General Accounting Office and the General Services Administration.
 - d. The other departments, agencies, boards and commissions including its participation in interdepartmental bodies.

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- e. State and local governments.
 - f. Non-governmental groups.
 - g. The public and the press.
3. The organization and functions of selected departments, agencies, boards and commissions whose programs are of particular interest to the appointee.
 4. The Hatch Act; the merit system and excepted positions.
 5. Conflict of interest legislation and the anti-lobbying act.
 6. The organization and procedures of the department or agency including its legislative and budget processes and security programs.
 7. The authority, duties, and responsibilities of the appointee described as precisely as possible.
 8. Agency programs (background, status, objectives and problems) and guidance concerning Presidential or agency policy in areas of concern to the appointee.
 9. Identification of those persons in the organization and in other parts of the Government who occupy key positions with respect to problems in the appointee's area of interest.
 10. Information needed to facilitate the personal adjustment of the appointee including protocol, housing, taxes, schools, pay, insurance, retirement and other benefits.

Orientation programs will be tailored to the needs of individual appointees, emphasizing personal discussions with high level officials, including the appointee's predecessor wherever possible. Written materials should be provided when appropriate. Orientation prior to taking the oath of office is desirable when this can be arranged.

Central Responsibilities: There are several aspects of the above outline which relate to matters of Administration policy or to the operation of parts of the Government other than the particular agency of a new appointee. In order to assure adequate coverage of such subjects and to avoid having each agency duplicate the efforts of other agencies in preparing presentations on matters of general interest, the following arrangements will be made:

1. In the case of secretaries of departments and heads of principal agencies, either the President or the Assistant to the President will, as is customary, identify and discuss with the new appointee the major policy issues in the appointee's area of responsibility with which the Administration is concerned.
2. A representative of the Bureau of the Budget, designated by the Director, will describe to each appointee the organization and functions of the Executive Branch of the Government and its relationships with the Judicial and Legislative Branches.
3. The Department of State will designate one or more individuals who will be available to inform appointees (and their families) on protocol.
4. The Department of Justice will designate one or more persons who will be available to inform appointees on conflict-of-interest statutes, the anti-lobbying act and related problems.

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5. The Civil Service Commission will designate one or more persons who will be available to inform appointees on civil service laws, procedures, and policies, including the merit systems, excepted positions and the Hatch Act.
6. Each Cabinet Assistant and, in other agencies, the Executive Assistant to the Agency Head or Chairman will be available on request to inform appointees from other agencies on the work of his department or agency and its inter-agency relationships; to act as liaison officer with the White House and with other agencies on this program and to give leadership to the program within his department or agency.
7. A representative of the White House staff will be available to discuss with each new appointee the President's standing requirements for good staff work on matters of White House and inter-departmental concern, and to describe the existing procedures for ensuring this. (For subordinates of agency heads, this briefing will be arranged in each case through the agency head.)
8. The Cabinet Secretariat, in its continuing capacity as a liaison office with the departments and agencies, will facilitate the conduct of this program.

Recommendation:

That the President approve the above proposals.

Implementation: If the President approves this proposal, the Secretary to the Cabinet will inform all departments, agencies, boards and commissions of this decision and request them to prepare a plan for orienting their own appointees and for assisting in orienting those from other agencies in accordance with the policies outlined above. Each agency will provide the Cabinet Secretary with an outline of its plan and be prepared to commence orientation of new appointees by October 1, 1957.

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